Census of rhinoceros in Kaziranga National Park

*60. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA :
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) when was the last rhinoceros census done in the Kaziranga National Park;

(b) whether it is a fact that the number of rhinoceros has gone down significantly;

(c) if so, what are the major causes of their death; and

(d) the details of the steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH) : (a) As per the information received from the State Government of Assam, the last census of rhinoceros in Kaziranga National Park was done during 2009.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. There are no such reports. On the contrary, the number of rhinoceros has increased from 1855 in 2006 to 2048 in 2009. However, major causes of death of rhinoceroses include old age, disease, man-animal conflict, accident, poaching drowning, tiger kill, etc.

(d) Important steps taken by the Central Government for conservation of wildlife including rhinoceros in the country are as follows :

1. Threatened species of wildlife, including Rhinos are placed in the Schedules of the Wildlife (Protection), Act, 1972, thereby according them the highest degree of protection.

2. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended from time to time and made more stringent against wildlife related offences.

3. A network of Protected Areas has been established to conserve wildlife and their habitats including rhinoceros.

4. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to check illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

5. The State/UT Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around wildlife rich areas.

6. Financial and technical assistance is extended to the State/UT Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz*, uIntegrated Development of Wildlife Habitatsu, uProject Tigeru and uProject Elephantu including for providing better protection and conservation of wildlife rhinoceros.

7. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme - uIntegrated Development of Wildlife Habitatsu, a new component has been added for initiating uRecovery Programme for critically endangered species including rhinoceros and their habitats" during the 11th Five Year plan period.

In addition, the State Government has also taken the following measures to protect wild animals including rhinoceros:

1. Protection camps have been increased from 130 to 146 in 2009 in Kaziranaga National Park.

2. Home Guards armed with .303 rifles have been developed for intensive patrolling within the National Park.

3. Intelligence network has been strengthened.

4. Vacant posts of front line staff have been filled up.

5. Awareness campaigns are organized in the neighbouring areas of the Kaziranga National Park.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Royalty on minerals

282. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY :
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS :

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether royalty on main minerals has been increased by now;

(b) if so, the extent of increase; if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether, keeping in view the approvals/special mentions made by States and MPs of all parties on value-based payment of royalty amendments are being carried out; and

(d) by when the above announcement would be made ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) and (b) The Government has notified revised rates of royalty in respect of minerals (other than minor minerals, coal and lignite, sand for stowing and uranium) in the Official Gazette *vide* GSR 574 (E) dated 13th August, 2009. The royalty rates have been increased for several minerals and at present *ad-valorem* rates range between 1.4% of sale price to 20% of sale price. The tonnage rate range between Rs. 20 per tonne to Rs. 880 per tonne. As far as coal and lignite is concerned, the rates were revised in August, 2007 itself.

(c) The revision of royalty rates was undertaken on the basis of recommendations of a Study Group constituted in the Ministry, which also included representatives from State Government concerned, Central Government Ministries/Departments and Industry Association.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.